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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR X0XX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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Major media reported that Israel/PM Benjamin Netanyahu will no longer demonstrate flexibility in the negotiations over Gilad Shalit's release. Israel Radio quoted a senior Israeli diplomatic source as saying that Israel is not prepared to release some Palestinian prisoners and that it will not compromise on this

issue.

The media reported that last night the IDF launched a series of air strikes overnight against targets in Gaza, hours after a Katyusha rocket fired from the Strip hit an area south of Ashkelon. The media reported that at least three Palestinians were killed. Four others are missing. The IDF Spokesman's Office said IAF aircraft bombed four Gaza targets: a tunnel linking the Strip to Israel, a weaponry workshop in Gaza City, and two smuggling tunnels linking the southern Strip to Egypt. The Jerusalem Post cited IsraelQs concern that Iran and Hizbullah may be forging a Fatah terror splinter group.

HaQaretz reported that a high-level American delegation is visiting Israel this week, headed by Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Michael Posner. The delegation arrived on Sunday and has met with cabinet ministers, senior civil servants, and IDF officers as well as representatives of Israeli human rights organizations. Posner was quoted as saying that his delegation wants to help Israel remove the Goldstone report on last year's war in Gaza from the international agenda. He said this should be accomplished through an Israeli investigation of the five most serious incidents described in the report, all of which involved civilian deaths.

HaQaretz reported that Washington is now considering the possibility of launching "proximity talks" between Israel and the Palestinians, as PA President Mahmoud Abbas continues to object to direct talks. Under this plan, U.S. Special Envoy Senator George Mitchell and his staff would meet separately with both parties, present each side's positions to the other and then try to bridge the gaps. This is the

same system both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton used (unsuccessfully) for Israeli-Syrian talks. HaQaretz says that the idea arose after Abbas made it clear to both the U.S. and Egypt that he would not meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unless Israel pledged to completely freeze all construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem for five months after the talks began. Israel refuses to do so. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel does not want to see deadlines imposed on the negotiating process with the Palestinians, even as the U.S. is endorsing the idea of a two-year time frame. Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren told The Jerusalem Post: QIn the past, attempts to impose time frameworks have not proved either realizable or helpful. Oren talked hours before Mitchell touted his idea that peace with the Palestinians can be reached within two years.

All media reported that yesterday Labor Knesset Member Ophir Pines-Paz announced his resignation from the Knesset and departure from his party. He was quoted as saying: QI have no faction and no leader.Q Pines-Paz stated that his party had abandoned its values over the past 15 years. Einat Wilf, an associate of DM and Labor Chairman Ehud Barak, will succeed him in the Knesset. The media agree that the resignation dashes the rebels' hopes of splitting from Labor to form a separate faction, a move requiring at least a third of the party's MKs. DM Barak, who expressed his regret over Pines-PazQs departure, was quoted as saying: QEveryone is replaceable, even myself.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as saying yesterday during an appearance at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that the U.S. does not want to see confrontation with Iran but that it is still preparing its military for that possibility.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin has secretly met with President Abbas. The newspaper quoted senior Palestinian officials as saying that the two discussed the new diplomatic initiative that Egypt is leading with WashingtonQs approval.

HaQaretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that the Prime Minister's Office issued a complaint to the White House several days ago lamenting ongoing incitement against Israel by Palestinian leaders. In the complaint, senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office urged their American counterparts to demand that PA President Mahmoud Abbas cease to glorify the memory of terrorists who murdered Israelis. The complaint went on to insist that the Palestinians live alongside Israelis peacefully and spread peace. This complaint

is the first of its kind against Palestinian incitement to gain media attention in Israel, after many years during which Israel largely refrained from making official complaints, or delivered these complaints discreetly to the Palestinian President.

Maariv and other media reported that DM Barak has instructed to ease building instructions for settlers in the West Bank.

Media quoted some Israeli defense officials as saying that the Iron Dome missile defense system cannot give complete protection.

Maariv and Israel Radio reported that Deputy FM Daniel Ayalon has recommended to FM Avigdor Lieberman not to extend the mandate of TIPH (Temporary International Presence in Hebron) which expires at the end of this month because, according to Ayalon, TIPH has produced distorted and one-sided reports.

A Yediot feature compares the attitude of Israelis to Gilad Shalit to that of Americans to Qlitttle knownQ U.S. Taliban prisoner Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl. In another article, Yediot features Gen. Stanley McChrystalQs activity in Afghanistan.

Yediot, Maariv, and The Jerusalem PostQs web site reported that yesterday the Koret Foundation (KIEDF) and the Overseas Private Corporation (OPIC) launched a 600-million shekel (around \$150 million) campaign to support the Negev and Gilboa regions. Ambassador Cunningham attended the ceremony at President Shimon PeresQ residence.

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Mideast:  
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Block Quotes:  
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#### I. QStarting from the End

Senior columnist and longtime peace advocate Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (1/8): QIn the past few weeks, a number of threatening messages have arrived in Jerusalem from the White House. The U.S. President's top adviser, Rahm Emanuel, was quoted by our diplomats in Washington as having said that Obama was tired of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Emanuel reportedly told them something to the effect that they were wasting precious time and missing the opportunity to reach peace. Eventually the United States will simply give up, stop dealing with this interminable conflict and we leave Israel alone, he reportedly said.... There are people who believe that the only person among us at this time who is capable of giving up territory and moving the settlers is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who, like Begin, would enjoy massive support if he were to make concessions in return for peace. However, nothing will move without an American plan, without a massive push, even a forced one, from Obama. We were always wary of a forced solution but it is most likely that there are greater dangers than that -- the continuation of terrorism and Palestinian demographic dominance. Instead of broadcasting to us weariness and anger, it would be better if Obama would initiate a mediation proposal or obligatory arbitration so as to achieve peace and permanent borders between the two peoples.

#### II. QMeanwhile, Netanyahu Is in an Evasive Mood

Diplomatic correspondent and television anchor Ben Caspit wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (1/8): QIn the final analysis, he is cheating. It is not yet clear whom. Are the cheated ones Obama-Peres-Barak-Mubarak, or [senior Likud members] Benny-Bogie-Tzipi (Hotovely), Kahlon, and Livnat? Netanyahu is simultaneously holding both ends of a very long stick. The problem is that he is walking on a tight rope over an abyss. He wonQt get far when he has at most nine months until the end of the [construction] freeze.... He may be behind the initiatives ... to launch real negotiations with the Palestinians with a clear deadline (two years).... Or he may want to waste time, exhaust everyone, and return to the warm lap of [his wife and patrons].... On the other hand there may be a condition such as [a plan providing for a withdrawal to the 1967 lines], he could be wriggling and itQs

impossible to know but it is possible to understand heQs in a bind, and that Qright nowQ thereQs nothing, but should there be something, weQll know what to do -- or we wonQt.

### III. QProvocation in East Jerusalem

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (1/8) : Netanyahu's encouragement -- albeit silent -- to the variety of government, municipal, and private blueprints to populate East Jerusalem with Jews is casting doubt over his enthusiastic calls to resume the talks with the Palestinians. Accelerating Israeli construction in the east of the city, which the international community sees as the capital of the future Palestine, is regarded as provocation, intended to sabotage the negotiations even before they begin. Like his predecessors, Netanyahu agreed to negotiate over Jerusalem's status as part of the final status agreement. But his acts foil any possible compromise, deepen the conflict in the city and destroy the chance to implement the two-state solution.

### IV. QWhy No QViva Somalia ?

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (1/8) : QWhat could be worse than being forgotten in the rubble of war? As The New York Times reported this week, Gazans feel forsaken. The constant flow of humanitarian aid is staving off hunger and disease, but a pall of listlessness besets the Strip.... There's a revealing comparison to be made between the QsiegeQ of Gaza and what is happening in Somalia, where the World Food Program this week was forced to abandon one million tormented people because Islamist gunmen have made it impossible for its staff to operate.... The difference between Somalia and Gaza is that the people of Somalia are not only forgotten in the rubble, their desperation is... simply not interesting. They are people without options. Those responsible for their plight are Islamists, not Zionists or Westerners -- though, for the Euro-Left, it's all America's fault somehow. In stark contrast, the people of Gaza do have options that would end their misery. They could stop supporting Hamas, which has mobilized their polity against coexistence with Israel; they could make peace among themselves and allow the comparatively moderate West Bank Palestinian leadership -- which is recognized by the international community -- back into the Strip. They could free IDF soldier Gilad Shalit whom they kidnapped in 2006. They could stop launching mortars against Israel's civilian population, as they repeatedly did this week. They could choose a two-state solution and accept that Jews also have a right to a homeland. They could end the Qsiege.Q They could build instead of reveling in the rubble and in their victimization.

CUNNINGHAM